

5

**CLAIMS**

What is claimed is:

1. A sensing device for use with a liquid storage tank having primary and secondary areas, comprising:

10 a first sensing component configured to determine a vapor pressure of the primary area; and

a second sensing component configured to determine a vapor pressure of the secondary area upon isolation of the primary area from the secondary area at a predetermined liquid level in the liquid storage tank; and

15 a third sensing component configured to determine a temperature in the liquid storage tank.

2. The sensing device as recited in claim 1, comprising a fourth sensing component configured to determine a temperature of the primary area, and wherein the third sensing component is configured to determine a temperature of the secondary area.

20

3. The system as recited in claim 1, wherein the first and second sensing components comprise EVAPorative-pressure sensors couplable to the liquid storage tank.

25 4. The system as recited in claim 1, wherein at least one of the first and second sensing components comprises a temperature and EVAPorative-pressure sensor couplable to the liquid storage tank.

5           5.       The system as recited in claim 1, wherein the first, second and third  
sensing components are operable in a liquid fuel tank having a liquid fuel disposed  
therein.

          6.       A liquid storage tank, comprising:  
10       a housing having primary and secondary areas configured to be isolated from  
          each other upon insertion of a predetermined amount of liquid in the  
          housing;  
          a first sensing component located in the primary area and the configured to  
          determine vapor pressure;  
15       a second sensing component located in the secondary area and configured to  
          determine vapor pressure; and  
          a third sensing component located in the housing and configured to determine  
          temperature.

20       7.       The liquid storage tank as recited in claim 6, wherein the housing is  
configured to store liquid fuel.

          8.       The liquid storage tank as recited in claim 6, wherein the housing  
comprises plastic.

25       9.       The liquid storage tank as recited in claim 8, wherein the housing  
comprises blow-molded plastic.

5           10.     The liquid storage tank as recited in claim 6, wherein the housing is  
configured to reside in a vehicle.

          11.     A vehicular system, comprising:  
a vehicle;  
10       a fuel tank disposed in the vehicle, the fuel tank having primary and secondary  
          areas configured to isolate from each other upon insertion of a  
          predetermined amount of fuel in the fuel tank;  
first and second sensing components configured to determine vapor pressure and  
          located in the primary and secondary areas, respectively; and  
15       a third sensing component located in the fuel tank and configured to determine  
          temperature.

          12.     The vehicle system as recited in claim 11, wherein at least one of the  
first, second and third sensing components is configured to communicate with  
20       processing circuitry.

          13.     The vehicle system as recited in claim 11, comprising an indicator  
configured to indicate a quantity of fuel in the fuel tank, wherein the indicator is  
configured to communicate with the processing circuitry.

25

          14.     The vehicle system as recited in claim 11, wherein the vehicle is an  
automobile.

5           15.     The vehicle system as recited in claim 11, wherein at least one of the first  
and a second sensing components comprises a temperature and evaporation-pressure  
sensor.

          16.     The vehicle system as recited in claim 11, wherein the fuel tank  
10   comprises a plastic material.

          17.     The vehicle system as recited in claim 16, wherein the fuel tank  
comprises an blow-moldable plastic.

15           18.     The vehicle system as recited in claim 11, comprising a fourth sensing  
component located in the primary area and configured to determine temperature, and  
wherein the third sensing component is located in the secondary area.

          19.     A liquid level sensing system for use in a tank having primary and  
20   secondary areas configured to isolate from each other upon insertion of a predetermined  
amount of liquid in the tank, comprising:

          a first sensing component located in the primary area and configured to  
          determine vapor pressure;

          a second sensing component located in the secondary area and configured to  
25           determine vapor pressure;

          a third sensing component located in the tank and configured to determine  
          temperature; and

5           processing circuitry configured to communicate with the first, second, and third  
              sensing components, wherein the processing circuitry is configured to  
              determine a level of liquid in the tank.

20.       The liquid level sensing system as recited in claim 19, wherein at least  
10       one of the first and second sensing components comprises a temperature and  
          EVAPorative-pressure sensor.

21.       The liquid level sensing system as recited in claim 19, wherein the first,  
          second, and third sensing components are operable in a liquid fuel environment.

15       22.       The liquid level sensing system as recited in claim 19, comprising an  
          indicator electrically coupled to the data processing circuitry and configured to indicate a  
          quantity of fuel in the tank visually.

20       23.       A method of determining a level of liquid in a storage tank having  
          primary and secondary areas configured to isolate from each other upon insertion of a  
          predetermined amount of liquid in the tank, comprising the acts of:

          determining vapor pressures in each of the primary and secondary areas upon  
          isolation thereof;  
25       determining a temperature of at least one of the primary and secondary areas;  
          and

5           calculating a level of liquid in the tank via the determined vapor pressures and  
            temperature.

24.       The method as recited in claim 23, comprising the act of correlating the  
level of liquid to a quantity of liquid in tank.

10

25.       The method as recited in claim 24, wherein the act of correlating  
includes correlating via a look-up-table.

26.       The method as recited in claim 24, comprising displaying the quantity of  
15 fuel in the tank visually via an indicator.

27.       A computer program for use with a liquid storage tank having primary  
and secondary areas configured to isolate from each other upon insertion of a  
predetermined amount of liquid in the tank, the computer program being disposed on  
20 one or more tangible media, comprising:

code for calculating a level of liquid in the tank via input values representative of  
the vapor pressure in each of the primary and secondary areas and of the  
temperature in at least one of the primary and secondary areas; and  
code for correlating the level of liquid in the tank to a quantity of fuel in the tank.

25

28.       The computer program as recited in claim 27, wherein the code for  
correlating includes a look-up-table.

5

29. The computer program as recited in claim 27, wherein the code for calculating determines the level of liquid in the tank via a formula, the formula being:

$$h_{new} = h_{max} - \left( \frac{(h_{max} - h_i)(T_{Operating})(P_{Initial})}{(T_{Initial})(P_{Operating2})} \right) - \left( \frac{(P_{Operating1} - P_{Operating2})}{(\rho_{fuel})(g)} \right)$$

30. The computer program as recited in claim 27, comprising a code for  
10 comparing decay rates of the vapor pressure and temperature in the tank subsequent to operation with a pre-determined vapor pressure and temperature decay rates to determine integrity of a fuel system.